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## A Tribute to Kenny Wynia, WSU's Exceptionally Gifted Carpenter

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## A Tribute to Kenny Wynia, WSU's Exceptionally Gifted Carpenter

Bill Meyer, WSU Senior Groundskeeper (Retired)



I've been thinking about Kenny Wynia lately. I miss him. I remember how I would see him on campus walking quickly from one building to another with his wiry mop of white hair blowing in the wind. When I talked with him I was always surprised by the depth of his ideas. He seemed to be full of ideas, enjoyed laughter, and was young in spirit.

On the WSU campus everyone regarded Kenny as a skilled carpenter and cabinetmaker. I had the pleasure of watching his projects come to life in the Facilities carpenter shop. He would build everything, but what he built best were beautiful desks and elaborate cabinets. I would watch him draw up his plans with his always present carpenter pencil and then measure and re-measure the project. I even occasionally assisted him in setting up his quality handmade cabinets in offices throughout the campus. It was best to watch Kenny, try to anticipate what he would need, be ready to assist immediately, and never break his concentration with a dumb question. Kenny's legacy can be found in many offices throughout the University.

Kenny was always ready to help if you needed assistance on a home project. I remember a number of times when I would give him a call and he would drive to Trempealeau. Marilyn, his wife, two of their devoted dogs, Penny and Niki, and Kenny would all come over to offer advice. Kenny would find a solution in a short time, while Marilyn and the dogs would sit patiently on the couch.

But here's something I bet you didn't know about Kenny. He liked trees, although I don't think you could call him a tree-hugger. He may have seen the connection between the wood he used in his projects and the trees that provided the wood. He could see those knots in the branches as a point of beauty and how they would add a special touch to the top of an Oak desk.

Kenny and his family donated several trees to the WSU grounds. In 2001 Kenny and Marilyn honored their granddaughter, Tanya, with an ornamental Pear tree near the northeast corner of Minne. Kenny and his family helped plant the tree. Since that day several other tree additions were made possible by donations to WSU by the Wynia family.

Bill Meyer, 2010, Senior Groundskeeper  
Contributing Columnist